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chests belong to the Gothic period, and it was during the Gothic influence that the finest and most artistic oak carving was produced. About the earliest date that we have for such a chest in England is 1190, a most interesting specimen showing the decorative uses to which iron was put at that time.

By the seventeenth century the chest had reached the utilitarian stage that it holds to-day, when it was every housewife's need, and every bride's hope. To this period belongs the one recently acquired by the Museum, which is figured in the accompanying illustration.

This chest shows no great elaboration of carving, but the quiet simplicity of the design gives it a dignity and charm that make it very attractive. The front is divided into the usual three panels, all bearing the same design, the middle one having added to it the initials "A. H." and the date "1655." The upper rail is carved in S curves, which decoration is repeated on the side stiles and on those dividing the panels. The lower rail is carved in a simple yet effective oak leaf pattern. The top of the lid is undecorated, but divided into three depressed panels. Over it all Time has laid a most appreciative hand, giving to the wood a deep, rich beauty as a gift from his master touch.



## RECENT ACCESSIONS OF OLD ENGLISH POTTERY AND STONEWARE

Collectors of old English pottery know how rare the white salt glaze stoneware of the eighteenth century has become, and it is not often nowadays that important pieces are offered for sale. The recent accession by the Museum of a small but choice collection of this characteristic English ware is therefore of considerable interest. The manufacture of white salt glaze in England extended through the eighteenth century. While it is a true stoneware, it resembles porcelain in some respects, as it is white in color, vitrified throughout, and has been so highly fired as to be translucent in its thinnest parts. The principal centre of its manufacture was Staffordshire, though it was made at isolated potteries in other parts of England. It was produced in a great variety of styles, being sometimes moulded with relief designs, and again painted with enamel colors, or decorated with scratched designs filled in with blue. At a later period it was frequently beautified by engravings transferred to the surface of the ware from copper plates.

Among the pieces recently acquired by the Museum may be mentioned a beautiful little tea-pot painted with colored enamels,—blue, green, yellow, and rose,—in the Chinese style. Such pieces are now exceedingly scarce, having been absorbed in public and private collections. Another rare example is a small tea-pot embellished with designs in relief,—vines with clusters of grapes, squirrels, etc., which have been colored blue.

Among the characteristic designs of Staffordshire salt glaze are square tea-pots moulded in the form of houses. A remarkably fine example of this type is included in the series, showing on one side the arms of Great Britain, and two gentlemen of the period standing at the doorway. The finest piece in the collection, however, is a large tea-pot, standing on a base eight inches in length, which is moulded in the form of a kneeling camel. This specimen is supposed

to be the largest of the kind that is known. There is only one other example of this style in a public museum in the United States.

One of the most important additions to the Museum collections in many years is an early English slip-decorated dish, bearing the name of THOMAS TOFT and the crowned head of Charles II. of England, repeated in the bowl five times and separated by four large eagles. The dish is eighteen inches in



WHITE SALT GLAZE TEA-POTS  
Staffordshire, England  
Eighteenth Century

diameter and possesses a trellised border in brown and orange slip. In the central medallion are the initials R. C., one letter on each side, the C being reversed.

There is no question that this is one of the oldest Toft dishes which has yet come to light. So far as we know the earliest dated example bears the date 1671. The initials in the central medallion are supposed to stand for Rex Carolus, or King Charles, although in other examples of pottery and stoneware bearing the heads of kings and queens the initials are reversed, the name preceding the letter R, as W. R., William Rex; A. R., Anne Regina; G. R., Georgius Rex, etc. It has been suggested that the letters on this piece stand for Restoration of Charles II., which would make it date after 1661 and during the Restoration period.

The piece is one of the most interesting, if not the very finest example of Toft ware which has yet been discovered. To make it more certain that the head was intended for that of Charles II., it bears a very close resemblance to one which is found on a signed Thomas Toft dish in the Hodgkin collection in England, on which are two heads, one representing a rude portrait of Catherine Braganza, and one of Charles II. in wig and lace collar. The dimensions of that dish are the same as those of the one procured for this Museum.

Genuine Toft dishes have become so rare that it is only once in many years that a good specimen turns up. So far as we know, there is no other example at present in any public collection in America, and probably not one in private hands. The decoration of this fine piece is in Toft's most characteristic style,



SLIP-DECORATED DISH  
With Crowned Heads of Charles II.  
By Thomas Toft, Staffordshire, England  
About 1666

the outlines of the medallions consisting of two rows of dots with a third row between. The coloring of the dish is in orange, yellow and brown.

Through the kindness of Mr. William P. Henszey, of this city, this exceedingly rare and desirable example has been secured for the Museum collection.